



The President's Daily Brief

18 May 1970

46

~~Top Secret~~ 50X1

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

18 May 1970

PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

The situation in Cambodia is discussed on *Page 1*.

Moscow [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] (*Page 3*)

50X1
50X1
50X1

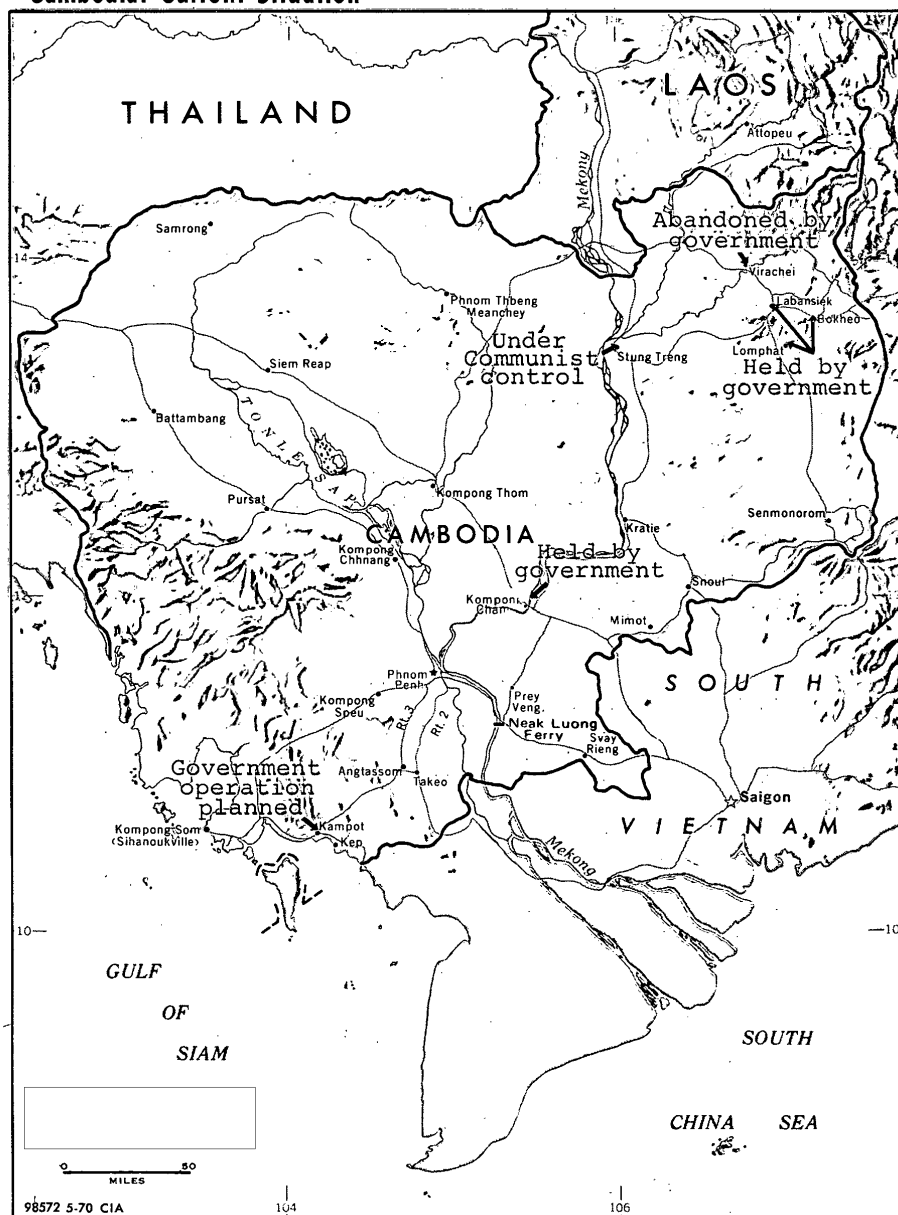
In South Vietnam, the Communists are trying to muster up another highpoint of military activity towards the end of May. Meanwhile, the progovernment Buddhist faction, Quoc Tu, is threatening to disband because of lack of government support in its dispute with the An Quang sect. (*Page 4*)

President Balaguer's impressive showing in the Dominican Republic's elections pre-empts any legal attempt to discredit his victory. (*Page 5*)

In Barbados, the government is having second thoughts about hosting the Black Power Conference. (*Page 6*)

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

Cambodia: Current Situation



50X1

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

CAMBODIA

Kompong Cham city is still in government hands, but the situation remains bleak in the remainder of the northeast. According to press accounts, armored units and Khmer Krom mercenaries pushed through Communist roadblocks south of Kompong Cham yesterday and with the help of three government battalions already in the city forced Communist elements to withdraw. The Khmer Krom, who were sent into Cambodia from South Vietnam several weeks ago, had previously played an instrumental role in clearing Communists from the Neak Luong area.

50X1

Farther north, Stung Treng is still under Communist control, although government remnants are holding the airstrip.

50X1

Beleaguered government forces are holding on in Lomphat, Labansiek, and Bokheo, but Virachei town on the Se San River is being abandoned.

No new fighting has been reported in the south. In an attempt to recapture some of the initiative Cambodian units are pressing south on Routes 2 and 3 to relieve the pressure around Takeo town.

50X1

(continued)

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

* * *

The 12-nation Djakarta conference on Cambodia concluded yesterday with a call for a broader international gathering at a future date. The communiqué designated the foreign ministers of Japan, Malaysia, and Indonesia to begin "urgent consultations" toward the convening of such a conference along lines suggested by the UN Secretary General and others. They are to approach the participants of the 1954 Geneva conference and all other interested parties. The communiqué followed anticipated lines in calling for cessation of hostilities in Cambodia forthwith and withdrawal of all foreign forces, respect for Cambodia's sovereignty and neutrality, and reactivation of the International Control Commission. A suggestion by the Thai foreign minister that the conference form its own observer team to investigate and report on developments in threatened countries such as Cambodia was unacceptable to most conference participants.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

USSR-FRANCE-CAMBODIA

50X1

who also said that conversations between the Soviet and French ambassadors in Phnom Penh last week virtually confirm that the Soviets will not break relations with the Lon Nol government.

50X1
50X1

All the Soviet officials involved in these talks are senior Far Eastern specialists in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Although they do not make policy they would not engage in these conversations without instructions from high level policy makers.

The fact that some Communist states, including China, have recognized Sihanouk's government and broken with Phnom Penh clearly has made Moscow's position of leadership in the Communist world awkward. If a western power, such as France, were to break with Phnom Penh, Moscow's position would be even more embarrassing.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

SOUTH VIETNAM

Intercepted messages and other reports indicate that the Communists are apparently aiming for a more intense period of military activity towards the end of May. This surge would be similar to past enemy "highpoints," and probably will be directed at the pacification and Vietnamization programs. The brunt of these attacks will probably come in the I and IV corps. The Communists can be expected to take advantage of the 24-hour allied cease-fire on 19 May, a date which this year coincides with the birthday of both Buddha and Ho Chi Minh, to move closer to target areas.

In III Corps the enemy appears to be in a state of disarray as a result of allied operations in Cambodia, and the enemy highpoint in this area may not get under way. Enemy units around Saigon, for example, have not shown signs of preparation for attacks.

* * *

[redacted], the leadership of the progovernment Buddhist faction, Quoc Tu, is annoyed by the lack of government support they have received in their dispute with the militant An Quang Buddhist faction. The Quoc Tu hierarchy is particularly disturbed by the continued presence of a number of An Quang monks on its pagoda grounds and by its inability to oust them. The government has refused to remove the monks and has cautioned the Quoc Tu leaders not to use force against them. As a result, the Quoc Tu claims it will turn its national pagoda over to the government, disband its organizational structure, and return its leading monks to their local pagodas.

50X1

By threatening to disband, the Quoc Tu leadership probably hopes to force the government to resolve the problem in its favor. Additionally, they may believe the government would be loath to allow the Quoc Tu--which is the official, regime-sanctioned Buddhist church of South Vietnam--to disband, leaving the militantly antigovernment An Quang sect practically unchallenged to influence the country's largely Buddhist population. The government can ill afford to lose the allegiance of any proregime organization, even such an ineffectual one as the Quoc Tu Buddhists, at a time when it is under fire from a wide variety of opposition elements.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Nearly complete returns indicate that Balaguer received about 56 percent of the total vote, trouncing his closest competitor Vice-President Lora by about 350,000 votes. Balaguer ran well throughout the country, even amassing a surprising plurality in the capital, where he was badly beaten in 1966.

Juan Bosch's major opposition Dominican Revolutionary Party (PRD), which abstained, probably will say that the small turnout of 1.2 million votes out of a possible 1.8 million eligible voters demonstrates its continued strength. Although the PRD's abstention certainly helped the president, Balaguer's strong showing in Santo Domingo undercuts such a stand.

Between now and the inauguration on 16 August, Balaguer may bring some opposition figures into the government, as he has done in the past, and further isolate the PRD. Balaguer's popular mandate, added to his already strong military support, makes it unlikely that the left will have much success should it try to oust him. The center and right, as evidenced by the voting, are generally satisfied with the president's performance.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

BARBADOS

We have a report that the government plans to bar the Second Regional Black Power Conference scheduled for July. Prime Minister Barrow, evidently spurred by the recent disorders in Trinidad, has taken a strong stand against the violence that has been associated with black power activities. He has proposed legislation that would make it a criminal offense to preach violence or racial hatred.

A growing number of Caribbean leaders are ready to risk political attack from radicals and are appealing to broader political sentiment and the public's desire for tranquility. This new attitude toward the radicals could make it difficult for the Black Power Conference to find a meeting place.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

NOTE

Laos: Communist units continue to deploy for additional attacks in the Bolovens Plateau area. In the north, Communist troops drove Meo guerrillas from positions a few miles north of Sam Thong in the first significant counterattack in weeks. The enemy is once again in a position to launch rockets at Long Tieng.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

Top Secret